The acquisition of the Dutch quantitative pronoun ER
Berends, S.; Sleeman, A.P.; Schaeffer, J.C.; Hulk, A.C.J.

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The acquisition of the Dutch quantitative pronoun ER: the role of background language(s)

Introduction

This study looks at transfer from L1 French and L1 English to the L2 Dutch. We specifically look at the ability to judge and imitate morpho-syntactic and semantic structures with the quantitative pronoun ER.

Dutch
\[ \text{Syntax} \]
- presence vs. absence
- non-presuppositionality vs. presuppositionality

French
\[ \text{Syntax} \]
- presence vs. absence
- non-presuppositionality vs. presuppositionality

Semantics
- indefiniteness vs. definiteness

Participants
L1 French (N=25), highly advanced, level > B2
L1 English (N=25), highly advanced, level > B2
L1 Dutch (N=25)

Average years of exposure: L1 French (22.1), L1 English (19.7)

Materials
- Grammaticality Judgement Task
- 3 experimental conditions (N=30), 15 fillers
- Sentence Imitation Task
- 3 experimental conditions (N=12), 8 fillers
- Dutch Vocabulary Task, Digit Span, Questionnaire

Discussion

Our predictions were based on Dutch being the L2 for both groups. However, all of the L1 French participants speak English too, and since all participants live in The Netherlands they come into contact with English on a regular basis. This leads to the idea that Dutch is in fact their L3.

By considering Dutch as an L3 for the L1 French group, we implemented the L2 Status Factor (Bardel and Falk 2007) that claims that the L2 acts as a filter, thereby blocking transfer from the L1 at the syntactic level. Thus, the L2 might have a bigger impact on learning the L3 than the L1. In that case we do not expect to find significant differences between the L1 French and the L1 English groups.

No significant difference between the L1 French and L1 English groups have been found in the GJT, thereby confirming the L2 Status Factor.

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